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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed how Taiwanese kindergarten teachers evaluated events of various classroom management skills used by early childhood student teachers in group activities. The kindergarten teachers evaluated effectiveness, appropriateness, frequency of practicing similar skills themselves, and the need to modify any of the above. A questionnaire was completed by 207 female kindergarten teachers. Results indicated that 7 of the 20 order-management skill events were evaluated as "very effective" or "very appropriate," "frequently used by kindergarten teachers," and "need not be modified." The teachers greatly favored rewards over punishment and authority, and tended to emphasize the importance of "Music and Games." Based on the results, it was concluded that the student teachers needed to improve their speech skills, though these skills may improve with experience, and that kindergarten teachers who were at least 35 years old and had more than 5 years of teaching experience tended to disapprove of the methods used by the student teachers. It was recommended that a study be conducted to compare kindergarten teachers with different lengths of work experience, of different ages and workplaces, and who taught children of different ages; that order-managing skills used by beginning teachers be studied and compared to skills used by experienced teachers, by means of videotape; and that long-term development of order-managing skills be observed later among the same teachers participating in this study. (DCP)

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A Study of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation of Order-Managing Skills
Used in Group Activities by Early Childhood Student Teachers
in Taiwan

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyze how kindergarten teachers evaluated, in aspects of effectiveness, appropriateness, frequency of using similar skills themselves, and need to be modified, the events of various order-managing skills used by early childhood student teachers in group activities, and to search for the factors that might significantly affect kindergarten teachers' evaluation. A total of 207 female kindergarten teachers were involved, with each completing a questionnaire with 20 events of group-order managing skills, selected on the basis of the ten skill categories established by Chen (1996). The major findings of the study were as follows:

Kindergarten teachers tended to highly consider the skill group of "Music and Games", and to evaluate the skill instances from the category of "using verbal instructions" as "less effective", "inappropriate", "seldom used by kindergarten teachers", and "needed to be modified". This might indicate the need of early childhood student teachers to improve their speech skills. Among the remaining skill categories, "giving rewards" and "using props or dramatic effects" were the two most highly regarded by kindergarten teachers rather than "practicing punishments" and "utilizing teacher authority".

As to the factors that might affect kindergarten teachers' evaluation, the skill instances of "practicing nursery rhymes", "playing the organ", and "implementing games such as Simon says" were not in the least affected by kindergarten teachers' personal background differences. The four most controversial skill instances included three from the category of "using verbal instructions" and one from "utilizing teacher authority". In addition, among the factors analyzed in chi-square tests, years of experience (at least five years) in the field was found to be the most influential factor that significantly affected kindergarten teachers' evaluation of student teachers' order-managing skills. The other influential factors included age, divided versus mixed-aged group of children, the location of kindergarten in urban versus rural area, and whether the teacher pursued a BA degree in early childhood education. The results of statistical analyses indicated that teachers with more years' working experience, or teachers of older age, or teachers working with divided-aged children, or teachers working in Taipei City, or teachers engaged in early childhood BA programs showed the same trend to assess a skill event as "less effective", "less appropriate", "seldom implemented by kindergarten teachers", and "need to be modified".

Finally, several recommendations, based upon the above findings, were respectively presented to prospective early childhood teachers and researchers in regards to better classroom management skills and the directions for further research.

Introduction

Classroom management was found, from related literature review, to be of great concern to novice as well as some experienced kindergarten teachers (Dowhower, 1991). The results of Dowhower's (1991) study showed that kindergarten teachers of more than fifteen years' or just one year's experience all agreed that classroom management was the most important thing to take care of at the beginning of a semester, and that teachers should set up classroom routines and rules as soon as possible to avoid management chaos. Observation in an exploratory study by McAfee (1984) revealed that children were much inattentive during group time, with teachers using relatively few techniques for monitoring, maintaining, and guiding children's attention and behaviors. McAfee (1984) further concluded that teachers did not perceive themselves as active and influential leaders in group time events, were underusing resources available for group time and methods of maintaining, monitoring and guiding behavior during group time.

And the above-mentioned situation was probably true for early childhood teachers in Taiwan (Li, 1986), especially for early childhood student teachers. However, it is not that surprising to know that generally only one or two teachers are in charge of at least 30 students in an early childhood classroom, and group activity was the most frequently-implemented type of activities in early childhood institutions in Taipei City (Hsing-Yee Foundation, 1987). In a survey to investigate the basic abilities of early childhood teachers, Li (1986) found that classroom management was rated as the third in rank for its importance after "the implementation of teaching" and "the planning of lessons". Classroom management was further analyzed into six abilities by Li (1986), among which was the ability to maintain classroom order in an appropriate way. As for early childhood student teachers in Taiwan, the management and maintenance of group order was of great concern. Wang (1992), in a survey study on the evaluation of the student teaching of the two-year early childhood teachers' training program, found that student teachers were concerned about the techniques to maintain classroom rules before the intensive student teaching, and about the maintenance of order and transition between activities during student teaching. Then after student teaching, the student teachers considered that the training program should have put a strong emphasis on the subject of classroom management for prospective early childhood teachers. In addition, Liu (1993), in a similar study on intensive student teaching, also pointed out that student teachers had a strong concern over the establishment of classroom rules and the maintenance of group order before the intensive student teaching. Liu (1993) further recommended to establish a course on classroom management on the basis of the concern of these prospective early childhood teachers.

In a lately-published study, however, Chen (1996) found results different from

Wang's (1992) and Liu's (1993) studies. Chen (1996) analyze group-order managing skills used by early childhood student teachers in Taiwan, and to investigate how these skills were used and whether student teachers were satisfied with these skills. From the 423 event records provided by the fifty-six student teachers from the two-year training program for early childhood teachers in National Taipei Teachers College, group-order managing skills were analyzed into ten categories, including using verbal instructions, giving rewards, practicing punishments, using props or dramatic effects, utilizing teacher authority, implementing peer pressure, practicing nursery rhymes or finger plays, playing musical instruments or rhythms, implementing body movements or games, and others. The order-managing skills used by the student teachers were mostly learned from observing their cooperating teachers and other teachers when they visited some local early childhood institutions. Up to 90 percent of the student teachers were satisfied or very much satisfied with the skills they used, but there were also about half of the student teachers who felt a need to modify or change their skills for better results (Chen, 1996).

Comparing the results of Chen's (1996) study with those from Wang's (1992) and Liu's (1993), one would wonder whether early childhood student teachers were good users of group-order managing skills and felt satisfied with themselves or they were bad at managing group order and showed a strong concern over their classroom management skills. If early childhood student teachers acquired their order-managing skills mostly from teachers with more experience, are the skills used by early childhood student teachers less effective and appropriate than those used by in-service teachers? Do early childhood teachers, especially experienced teachers, use similar order-managing skills as used by early childhood student teachers in group activities? How do they judge the order-managing skills used by inexperienced student teachers? If early childhood teachers approve or even often implement the order-managing skills used by student teachers, student teachers should put more confidence in the skills they use. If not, how can these order-managing skills be improved? Do early childhood teachers hold different opinions about the order-managing skills used by student teachers? What are the factors that may influence their evaluation? The investigation of the factors that might affect early childhood teachers' evaluation would help locate the key to improve student teachers' classroom management skills and to have a better survival stage for novice teachers (Katz, 1977).

The Present Study

The three objectives of the study on kindergarten teachers' evaluation of order-managing skills used by early childhood student teachers for group activities were as follows:

- (1) to analyze, in aspects of effectiveness, appropriateness, frequency of using

similar skills themselves, and need to be modified, how kindergarten teachers evaluated the events of various order-managing skills used by early childhood student teachers in group activities;

(2) to search for the factors that might significantly affect kindergarten teachers' evaluation of the instances of order-managing skills used in group activities by early childhood student teachers;

(3) to recommend some more appropriate order-managing skills for group activities, and to provide some practical guidelines for better classroom management skills for early childhood student teachers and beginning teachers.

Method

Subjects

A total of 207 in-service female kindergarten teachers were involved, with each completing a questionnaire for the study. (In Taiwan, kindergarten teachers could be teachers of three-, four-, as well as five-year-old children) Among them, 106 were asked to do so when they attended a workshop on classroom management conducted by the researcher. The rest of them were enrolled in the BA degree program for in-service teachers in the Department of Early Childhood Education in National Taipei Teachers College. These 101 teachers filled out the questionnaires when they took courses with the researcher.

The age of the 207 kindergarten teachers ranged from 21 to 55, with about half of them clustering around the range of 26 to 35. The working experience of these 207 kindergarten teachers ranged from less than one year up to thirty-five years with about 80 percent of them falling within the range of one to fifteen years' experience. About 70 percent of the kindergarten teachers were graduated from the two-year training program provided by the nine teachers' colleges in Taiwan. And about 25 percent of them had attended other training programs for kindergarten teachers. And among them, 128 were enrolled in early childhood BA degree programs in national teachers' colleges in Taiwan.

Among the 207 kindergarten teachers, 142 (68.6%) worked in public kindergartens and 64 (30.9%) worked in private kindergartens. There were 82 (39.6%) teachers who worked in urban kindergartens, and there were 125 (60.4%) who taught in rural kindergartens. And there were respectively 131 (63.3%), 38 (18.4%), 22 (10.6%), 16 (7.7%) teachers who worked in the northern, middle, and southern areas of Taiwan, and in the eastern area and offshore islands of Taiwan. Among the 207 teachers, five (2.4%) taught three-year-olds, 31 (15.0%) worked with four-year-olds, and 113 (54.6%) were teachers of five-year-olds, and the remaining 51 (24.6%) teachers worked with mixed-aged groups of children. Group activity was the

most common type of activity seen in the classrooms of 207 teachers. Only 38 (18.4%) teachers provided more small-group or learning-center activities than group activities.

Instrument and data collection.

Twenty events of group-order managing skills were selected and revised from student teachers' self-reporting event records to make a questionnaire for kindergarten teachers to evaluate student teachers' skill implementation. These 20 instances of order-managing skills were selected on the basis of the ten skill categories established by Chen (1996), including seven from "using verbal instructions", one from "giving rewards", one from "practicing punishments", two from "using props or dramatic effects", two from "utilizing teacher authority", one from "implementing peer pressure", six from the skill group of "Music and Games". Each written illustration of skill implementation is followed by a checklist with five questions designed to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness, self-reported frequency of using similar skills, need to modify each skill instance, and suggestion for modification. In addition, the questionnaire also collected data concerning basic personal information and job characteristics of the kindergarten teachers involved.

Data for the study were respectively collected in December 1994, and January and August, 1995. The 106 kindergarten teachers who attended the workshop on classroom management completed the questionnaire respectively on December 15, 1994 and January 9, 1995. The remaining 101 questionnaires completed by in-service kindergarten teachers who pursued BA degree in early childhood education in National Taipei Teachers College were collected on January 9, 1995 and August 5 and 17, 1995.

Data analysis.

Data analyses of the 207 questionnaires were proceeded in two stages. First, data collected were directly coded and keyed in to the computer for statistical analyses. Keyed-in data were twice checked prior to statistical analyses. Then, the coded data were analyzed for frequency, percentage, and chi-square tests using SPSSX. The results of frequency and percentage of each item in a question were used to analyze how kindergarten teachers evaluated each instance of skill implementation. Chi-square tests were conducted to explore for the factors that were significantly correlated with kindergarten teachers' assessment of each case of skill usage.

Results

Since the kindergarten teachers assessed the twenty events of order-managing skills one by one and their assessment of the twenty cases was independent of each other, the results of the analysis of the twenty skill instances were presented case by case with each case in a table regarding how the 207 kindergarten teachers evaluated

the effectiveness, appropriateness, self-reported frequency of using similar skills, and need to modify of each skill instance. In addition, the factors that might affected kindergarten teachers' assessment of each skill instance in its effectiveness, appropriateness, self-reported frequency of using similar skills, and need to modify were listed according the results of chi-square tests. The results of the twenty events of group-order managing skills were shown according to its skill category as follows:

The skill category of "Using Verbal Instructions"

1. Skill Instance I: During the time for group sharing, Greg was showing his artwork, but the kids were just talking to each other. The teacher said: "Everybody has to take a good look at others' work. Thus, this is an interchange of everybody's artwork, and a way to show your respect to other persons."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance I were presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance I of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance I Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1) Effectiveness			
① Very effective	14	6.8	① Public vs. private*
② With little effect	150	72.5	
③ Without effect	38	18.4	
Missing	5	2.4	
(2) Appropriateness			
① Very appropriate	4	1.9	
② Appropriate	107	51.7	
③ Inappropriate	84	40.6	
④ Very inappropriate	4	1.9	
Missing	8	3.9	
(3) Using similar skills			
① Very often	27	13.0	
② Once in a while	152	73.4	
③ Never used before	19	9.2	
Missing	9	4.3	
(4) Need to be modified			
① Yes	154	74.4	① Work experience**
② No	46	22.2	
Missing	7	3.4	
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

2. Skill Instance II: Before sharing time, the teacher set up a rule to the children: "Zip up the zipper of your mouth. Whoever wants to speak, please raise his hand. And he is allowed to 'turn up the zipper of his mouth' (i.e. to speak) only when I ask him to."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance II were presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance II of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 2 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	30	14.5	①Work experience*
②With little effect	147	71.0	②Age*
③Without effect	22	10.6	
Missing	8	3.9	
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	5	2.4	①Children's age**
②Appropriate	93	44.9	
③Inappropriate	93	44.9	
④Very inappropriate	7	3.4	
Missing	9	4.3	
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	18	8.7	①Children's age*
②Once in a while	127	61.4	②Work experience*
③Never used before	54	26.1	③Age*
Missing	8	3.9	
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	149	72.0	
②No	48	23.2	
Missing	10	4.8	
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

3. Skill Instance III: Before giving instructions as to how to make simple musical instruments, the teacher told the kids: "If you cannot stay quiet and listen to me now, I will leave you alone. If you don't know what to do later or make mistakes, you cannot do it over again."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance III were presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance III of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 3 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	18	8.7	
②With little effect	133	64.3	
③Without effect	52	25.1	
Missing	4	1.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	1	.5	
②Appropriate	48	23.2	
③Inappropriate	135	65.2	
④Very inappropriate	16	7.7	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	7	3.4	
②Once in a while	110	53.1	
③Never used before	83	40.1	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	169	81.6	①Work experience*
②No	27	13.0	
Missing	11	5.3	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

4. Skill Instance IV: The teacher was introducing the activities in every learning center. When it came to the art center, the kids started to talk. The teacher said: "I will wait until you finish talking."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance IV were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance IV of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 4	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	66	31.9	
②With little effect	109	52.7	
③Without effect	25	12.1	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	21	10.1	①Public vs. private*
②Appropriate	129	62.3	
③Inappropriate	42	20.3	
④Very inappropriate	7	3.4	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	54	26.1	
②Once in a while	119	57.5	
③Never used before	25	12.1	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	98	47.3	
②No	100	48.3	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

5. Skill Instance V.: During group sharing time, the children were eager to express their opinions. Some were talking to each other. Some were standing up and raising their hands. There were only a few children sitting and raising their hands and waited for the teacher to call their names. The teacher said: "Now I will invite those who have their bottoms stuck to their seats, the zippers of their mouths zipped up, and their hands raised to speak."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance X were presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance X of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 5	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	61	29.5	①Children's age*
②With little effect	115	55.6	
③Without effect	24	11.6	
Missing	7	3.4	
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	17	8.2	①Work experience*
②Appropriate	98	47.3	
③Inappropriate	76	36.7	
④Very inappropriate	8	3.9	
Missing	8	3.9	
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	47	22.7	①Children's age*
②Once in a while	90	43.5	②Work experience*
③Never used before	60	29.0	
Missing	10	4.8	
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	121	58.5	①Children's age*
②No	74	35.7	②Work experience***
Missing	12	5.8	
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: *p<.05 ***p<.001

6. Skill Instance VI: The teacher told the children to take them outdoors to play. The kids shouted and all rushed to the door without lining up. The teacher said: "Let me see who is shouting and not lining up. I am not taking him out to play."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance VI were presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance VI of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 6	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	61	29.5	
②With little effect	109	52.7	
③Without effect	29	14.0	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	10	4.8	
②Appropriate	78	37.7	
③Inappropriate	103	49.8	
④Very inappropriate	8	3.9	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	38	18.4	①Children's age*
②Once in a while	103	49.8	
③Never used before	54	26.1	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	141	68.1	
②No	56	27.1	
Missing	10	4.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

7. Skill Instance VII: The children went outdoors and they were out of order. The teacher told the kids that she was going to announce an important thing. Then mysteriously she lowered down her voice to speak.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance VII were presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance VII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 7 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	144	69.6	
②With little effect	43	20.8	
③Without effect	14	6.8	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	84	40.6	①Work experience**
②Appropriate	93	44.9	②Age*
③Inappropriate	20	9.7	
④Very inappropriate	3	1.4	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	99	47.8	①Work experience*
②Once in a while	81	39.1	②Age**
③Never used before	17	8.2	
Missing	10	4.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	41	19.8	①Work experience*
②No	154	74.4	②Age*
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01

The skill category of "Giving Rewards":

8. Skill Instance VIII: The activity of baking toasts was in process. Some children shouted: "Teacher, I want this piece." Then many kids followed them and shouted too. The teacher said: "I will give this delicious-looking piece of toast to Dave, who knows how to sit well and to put his hands and feet at the right places."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance VIII were presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance VIII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 8	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	145	70.0	
②With little effect	54	26.1	
③Without effect	2	1.0	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	50	24.2	
②Appropriate	123	59.4	
③Inappropriate	28	13.5	
④Very inappropriate	6	2.9	
Missing	0	0.0	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	95	45.9	
②Once in a while	94	45.4	
③Never used before	10	4.8	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	61	29.5	①Age*
②No	134	64.7	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: *p<.05

The skill category of "Practicing Punishments":

9. Skill Instance IX: The whole class were taking a rest separately at four tables. Then the teacher asked kids at different tables to come over to get together for next activity. The teacher invited kids at the first and second tables to come over. At this time, a few kids at the third and fourth tables started to talk. The teacher said: "It doesn't matter. We will let the kids at the third and fourth tables continue talking. We just need the kids from the first and second tables to play the game." Then, the teacher explained how to play the game only to the kids from the first and second tables.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance IX were presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance IX of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 9 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	61	29.5	①Children's age**
②With little effect	111	53.6	②Age*
③Without effect	29	14.0	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	17	8.2	
②Appropriate	75	36.2	
③Inappropriate	102	49.3	
④Very inappropriate	5	2.4	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	25	12.1	
②Once in a while	104	50.2	
③Never used before	66	31.9	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	124	59.9	
②No	67	32.4	
Missing	16	7.7	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01

The skill category of "Using Props or Dramatic Effects":

10. Skill Instance X: The teacher was using a rabbit puppet to teach the children to sing a song. After singing, the teacher asked the kids to stand up and make movements. The kids were out of order. The teacher said to the children through the rabbit puppet: "Your teacher told me that the kids in this class were very good. They followed rules and they sang and danced very well."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance X were presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance X of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 10 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	134	64.7	
②With little effect	61	29.5	
③Without effect	4	1.9	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	91	44.0	
②Appropriate	95	45.9	
③Inappropriate	13	6.3	
④Very inappropriate	0	0.0	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	100	48.3	
②Once in a while	85	41.1	
③Never used before	13	6.3	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	35	16.9	①Pursuing BA degree*
②No	158	76.3	②Age*
Missing	14	6.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

11. Skill Instance XI: The teacher was talking about the life circle of a silkworm, using a specimen. Some children were talking to each other. Some were standing up to take a better look at the specimen. The teacher said: "The specimen says that he is angry. And he doesn't want the kids to look at him." Then, the teacher closed up the specimen.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XI were presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XI of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 11	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	115	55.6	
②With little effect	78	37.7	
③Without effect	6	2.9	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	49	23.7	①Children's age*
②Appropriate	110	53.1	
③Inappropriate	41	19.8	
④Very inappropriate	1	0.5	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	74	35.7	①Children's age*
②Once in a while	101	48.8	
③Never used before	24	11.6	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	71	34.3	
②No	121	58.5	
Missing	15	7.2	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

The skill category of "Utilizing Teacher Authority":

12. Skill Instance XII: The teacher was leading a group discussion. Every child was eager to say something. There were noises all over the classroom. All of a sudden, the teacher stopped talking and looked very seriously at the kids.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XII were presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 12	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	82	39.6	
②With little effect	108	52.2	
③Without effect	9	4.3	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	23	11.1	①Activity type*
②Appropriate	104	50.2	②Work experience*
③Inappropriate	70	33.8	③Age*
④Very inappropriate	2	1.0	④Urban vs. rural*
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	36	17.4	①Work experience*
②Once in a while	136	65.7	②Urban vs. rural**
③Never used before	26	12.6	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	104	50.2	①Activity type*
②No	87	42.0	②Urban vs. rural**
Missing	16	7.7	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

13. Skill Instance XIII: During the time for group discussion, the kids were talking among themselves. The teacher said: "Now, I would like to see who the super kid is."

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XIII were presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XIII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 13 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	97	46.9	
②With little effect	86	41.5	
③Without effect	13	6.3	
Missing	11	5.3	
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	38	18.4	
②Appropriate	125	60.4	
③Inappropriate	32	15.5	
④Very inappropriate	0	0.0	
Missing	12	5.8	
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	87	42.0	①Urban vs. rural***
②Once in a while	84	40.6	
③Never used before	23	11.1	
Missing	13	6.3	
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	65	31.4	①Pursuing BA degree*
②No	124	59.9	②Work experience**
Missing	18	8.7	③Urban vs. rural**
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The skill category of "Implementing Peer Pressure":

14. Skill Instance XIV: Before snack time, some children were cleaning up, and some were wondering about in the classroom. The teacher picked one child from each group as the little teacher(i.e. monitor) of the group to get snack for his/her group and to keep his/her group in good order.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XIV were presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XIV of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 14 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	83	40.1	
②With little effect	99	47.8	
③Without effect	13	6.3	
Missing	12	5.8	
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	41	19.8	
②Appropriate	115	55.6	
③Inappropriate	36	17.4	
④Very inappropriate	3	1.4	
Missing	12	5.8	
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	72	34.8	①Age*
②Once in a while	81	39.1	
③Never used before	40	19.3	
Missing	14	6.8	
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	69	33.3	
②No	122	58.9	
Missing	16	7.7	
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: *p<.05

The skill group of "Music and Games":

15. Skill Instance XV: Coming back to the classroom from outdoors, the children were noisy. The teacher started to recite "Plant the big seeds in the big fields. Water them and there come out big flowers. Plant the small seeds in the small fields. Water them and there come out small flowers." Adding hand movements, the kids followed the teacher, and their voice became lower and lower as they recited along.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XV were presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XV of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 15 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	162	78.3	
②With little effect	34	16.4	
③Without effect	2	1.0	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	115	55.6	
②Appropriate	76	36.7	
③Inappropriate	7	3.4	
④Very inappropriate	0	0.0	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	124	59.9	
②Once in a while	63	30.4	
③Never used before	8	3.9	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	22	10.6	
②No	168	81.2	
Missing	17	8.2	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

16. Skill Instance XVI: Before the story time, the children were either standing up or sitting down on the floor. They were out of order. The teacher took out a drum and struck the drum twice to signal the children to take their seats.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XVI were presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XVI of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 16 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	106	51.2	
②With little effect	85	41.1	
③Without effect	3	1.4	
Missing	13	6.3	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	53	25.6	
②Appropriate	119	57.5	
③Inappropriate	22	10.6	
④Very inappropriate	1	0.5	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	81	39.1	①Children's age*
②Once in a while	87	42.0	
③Never used before	25	12.1	
Missing	14	6.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	60	29.0	①Public vs. private*
②No	126	60.9	
Missing	21	10.1	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

17. Skill Instance XVII: Coming into the classroom after outdoor play, the children were in chaos. The teacher played the piano and the kids started to rest on the table.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XVII were presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XVII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 17 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	147	71.0	
②With little effect	52	25.1	
③Without effect	2	1.0	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	88	42.5	
②Appropriate	104	50.2	
③Inappropriate	7	3.4	
④Very inappropriate	1	0.5	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	148	71.5	
②Once in a while	47	22.7	
③Never used before	2	1.0	
Missing	10	4.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	39	18.8	
②No	155	74.9	
Missing	13	6.3	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

18. Skill Instance XVIII: During the time for small-group activity, the teacher was spreading out materials and began to give instructions. The children were quite noisy at that time. The teachers clapped hands and said: "Please follow me and do what I am doing." In return, the children then said: "I will follow you and do what you are doing." Then the teacher used different body movements, and the kids followed her.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XVIII were presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XVIII of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 18 Assessment Results	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	165	79.7	
②With little effect	35	16.9	
③Without effect	1	0.5	
Missing	6	2.9	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	93	44.9	
②Appropriate	96	46.4	
③Inappropriate	10	4.8	
④Very inappropriate	1	0.5	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	122	58.9	
②Once in a while	67	32.4	
③Never used before	9	4.3	
Missing	9	4.3	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	37	17.9	
②No	158	76.3	
Missing	12	5.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

19. Skill Instance XIX: While the group discussion was in process, the children were noisy. The teacher said: "Kids, please stand up and sit down, and stand up and sit down." The teacher repeatedly asked the children to stand up and sit down. The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XIX were presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XIX of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 19	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	67	32.4	
②With little effect	122	58.9	
③Without effect	11	5.3	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	17	8.2	①Pursuing BA degree*
②Appropriate	112	54.1	
③Inappropriate	68	32.9	
④Very inappropriate	2	1.0	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	28	13.5	
②Once in a while	120	58.0	
③Never used before	49	23.7	
Missing	10	4.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	103	49.8	①Pursuing BA degree*
②No	91	44.0	
Missing	13	6.3	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

20. Skill Instance XX: After movement class, the children were all excited and couldn't calm down. The teacher then played the game with the kids. The teachers said: "One, two, three, kids made of wood." The kids stayed still. Then the teacher said: "One, two, three, sleeping beauties." The kids then rested their heads upon their close hands on their shoulder.

The results of the analysis of Skill Instance XX were presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Statistics of Kindergarten Teachers' Evaluation on Instance XX of Group-order Managing Skills Used by Early Childhood Student Teachers

Skill Instance 20	Kindergarten Teachers		Factors that affected teachers' evaluation (Chi-square Tests)
Assessment Results	f	%	
(1)Effectiveness			
①Very effective	160	77.3	
②With little effect	37	17.9	
③Without effect	3	1.4	
Missing	7	3.4	
=====			
(2)Appropriateness			
①Very appropriate	104	50.2	
②Appropriate	90	43.5	
③Inappropriate	5	2.4	
④Very inappropriate	0	0.0	
Missing	8	3.9	
=====			
(3)Using similar skills			
①Very often	90	43.5	①Work experience*
②Once in a while	77	37.2	
③Never used before	30	14.5	
Missing	10	4.8	
=====			
(4)Need to be modified			
①Yes	18	8.7	①Work experience*
②No	175	84.5	
Missing	14	6.8	
=====			
T o t a l	207	100.0	

Note: * $p < .05$

Discussion and Conclusions

Seven out of the 20 skill instances were evaluated by kindergarten teachers as "very effective", "very appropriate", "frequently used by kindergarten teachers", and "did not need to be modified". Among them, four (Skill Instances 15, 17, 18 and 20) were from the six instances under the skill group of "Music and Games", and the remaining three instances included the only instance from the seven selected under the category of "using verbal instructions" (Skill Instance 7), one from "giving rewards" (Skill Instance 8), and one from "using props or dramatic effects" (Skill Instance 10). These skill instances were highly recommended to early childhood student teachers and beginning teachers as "safe and reliable" or "best" order-managing skills for group activities. In addition to the skill group of "Music and Games", the 207 kindergarten teachers tended to recognize the skill instances under the categories of "giving rewards" and "using props or dramatic effects".

Five skill instances were evaluated as "less effective", "inappropriate", "seldom used by kindergarten teachers", and "needed to be modified". Four (Skill Instances 2, 3, 5 and 6) were from the seven instances under the category of "using verbal instructions", and one was the only case selected for "practicing punishments". Early childhood student teachers and beginning teachers were advised to avoid these instances of skill implementation. The higher rate of inappropriate skill usage from the category of "using verbal instructions" might indicate the need of early childhood student teachers to improve their speech skills.

As to the skill categories of "giving rewards" and "practicing punishments", the kindergarten teachers tended to approve the former rather than the latter. With regards to the skill instances under the skill categories of "utilizing teacher authority" and "implementing peer pressure", the teachers did not show any trend of inclination. The skill categories most frequently used by the kindergarten teachers were the instances from the skill group of "Music and Games", "giving rewards", "using props or dramatic effects", "utilizing teacher authority", and "implementing peer pressure", especially the skill group of "Music and Games". The skill instances from the categories of "using verbal instructions" and "practicing punishment" were seldom used by the kindergarten teachers.

As to the factors that might affect how the kindergarten teachers evaluated the skill events by early childhood student teachers, significant differences were not found regarding the kindergarten teachers' evaluation on Skill Instances 15, 17, and 18. The results indicated that the assessment of the kindergarten teachers on these three instances were almost similar regardless of kindergarten teachers' variable backgrounds. And these three skill instances all belonged to the skill group of "Music and Games". And there were four most controversial skill events (Skill Instances 2, 5, 7, and 12),

which the kindergarten teachers assessed significantly differently due to their variable backgrounds. Skill Instances 2, 5, and 7 were from the category of "using verbal instructions", and Skill Instance 12 was from the the skill category of "utilizing teacher authority". The results implied that early childhood student teachers might need to put a strong emphasis on using verbal instructions, and to improve their speech skills.

Among the factors analyzed in chi-square tests, years of experience (at least five years) in the field was found to be the most influential factor that significantly affected kindergarten teachers' evaluation of student teachers' order-managing skills. The longer the teacher worked in the field, the stronger the tendency for the teacher to evaluate an event of skill usage as "less appropriate", "seldom implemented by self", and "need to be modified". The other influential factors included age, divided versus mixed-aged group of children, the location of kindergarten in urban versus rural area, and whether the teacher pursued a BA degree in early childhood education. The results of statistical analyses indicated that older teachers, or teachers of divided-aged children, or teachers working in Taipei City, or teachers engaged in early childhood BA programs showed the same trend as more experienced teachers to assess a skill event as "less appropriate", "seldom implemented by kindergarten teachers", and "need to be modified".

Recommendations

Recommendations for More Appropriate Group-order Managing Skills

According to the above findings, some more appropriate order-managing skills for group activities and some practical suggestions for better results were provided for early childhood student teachers and beginning teachers. First of all, according to the result of the above analyses, the skill instances from the skill group of "Music and Games", "using props and dramatic effects", "giving rewards" were highly recommended to student teachers and beginning teachers for managing group order, especially the skill group of "Music and Games". These skill instances were approved by the kindergarten teachers regardless of their age, length of work experience, age of children they worked with, or whether they worked at public or private kindergartens. Secondly, the early childhood student teachers needed to improve their speech skills. However, better speech skills may be gained as their work experience increases. Thirdly, length of work experience may be the main factor that affected kindergarten teachers' evaluation of the group-order managing skills used by student teachers. The teachers with at least five years' of work experience and aged above 35 tended to disapprove the skills instances used the early childhood student teachers. Fourthly, the age of children the teachers worked with may be another intriguing factor that cast an influence on the kindergarten teachers' evaluation on the skill instances used by student teachers. Finally, the teachers who worked in metropolitan cities tended to

evaluate the skill instances differently from those who worked in rural areas.

Recommendations for Future Research

There were some important results found in this study of kindergarten teachers' assessment on group-order managing skills used by early childhood student teachers; however, this study was even more significant for it also built up a strong foundation for future research on the order-managing skills for group activities. Future research along this line can be conducted in at least three directions. First, a study can be conducted to compare kindergarten teachers with different lengths of work experience, ages, workplaces, and ages of children they worked with to investigate whether different groups of teachers assess the skills instances in a different way. Secondly, a qualitative study can be conducted to compare the order-managing skills used by novice teachers with those by experienced teachers through videotaping analysis. Thirdly, further research can be conducted to observe the long-term development of various order-managing skills used by the same early childhood teacher in a longitudinal study.

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